IN THE CLAIMS:

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~strikethrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

Please AMEND claims 20, 26 and 32 and Cancel claims in accordance with the following:

1-19. (Cancelled)

20. (currently amended) A method of displaying a personal connection map that includes a plurality of nodes representing persons and a plurality of links representing personal connections among the persons and strengths of the personal connections, the method comprising:

extracting metadata of the persons from among electronic documents that include information about the persons;

linking the metadata extracted based on a co-occurring relationship of the information about the persons in the electronic documents;

storing the metadata linked as secondary metadata into a database;

retrieving, from the database, the secondary metadata that satisfy a filter condition; and

displaying the personal connection map graphically based on the retrieved secondary metadata ~~retrieved~~by displaying a tree structure based upon eliminating from the personal connection map a first link representing a weakest personal connection among N links, N being an integer greater than one, when a closed loop is formed by N nodes and the N links in the personal connection map, the tree structure including the N nodes and N-1 links other than the first link.

21. (cancelled)

22. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 20, wherein the nodes are correlated with a time-line in the personal connection map.

23. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 20, further comprising displaying, when a plurality of nodes are selected from the personal connection map, a suitable venue for assembly of persons represented by the nodes selected.

24. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 23, further comprising displaying an effect on an environment caused by the persons assembling to the venue.

25. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 24, wherein the effect on the environment is CO_2 emission.

26. (currently amended) A computer-readable medium encoded with a computer program for displaying a personal connection map that includes a plurality of nodes representing persons and a plurality of links representing personal connections among the persons and strengths of the personal connections, by causing a computer to perform operations comprising:

extracting metadata of the persons from among electronic documents that include information about the persons;

linking the metadata extracted based on a co-occurring relationship of the information about the persons in the electronic documents;

storing the metadata linked as secondary metadata into a database;

retrieving, from the database, the secondary metadata that satisfy a filter condition; and

displaying the personal connection map graphically based on the retrieved secondary metadata ~~retrieved~~by displaying a tree structure based upon eliminating from the personal connection map a first link representing a weakest personal connection among N links, N being an integer greater than one, when a closed loop is formed by N nodes and the N links in the personal connection map, the tree structure including the N nodes and N-1 links other than the first link.

27. (cancelled)

28. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium according to claim 26, wherein the nodes are correlated with a time-line in the personal connection map.

29. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium according to claim 26, wherein the computer program further causes the computer to execute displaying, when a plurality of nodes are selected from the personal connection map, a suitable venue for assembly of persons represented by the nodes selected.

30. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium according to claim 29, wherein the computer program further causes the computer to execute displaying an effect on an environment caused by the persons assembling to the venue.

31. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable medium according to claim 30, wherein the effect on the environment is CO_2 emission.

32. (currently amended) An apparatus for displaying a personal connection map that includes a plurality of nodes representing persons and a plurality of links representing personal connections among the persons and strengths of the personal connections, comprising:

a computer processor executing

an extracting unit that extracts metadata of the persons from among electronic documents that include information about the persons;

a linking unit that links the metadata extracted based on a co-occurring relationship of the information about the persons in the electronic documents;

a database that stores therein the metadata linked as secondary metadata;

a retrieving unit that retrieves, from the database, secondary metadata that satisfy a filter condition; and

a displaying unit that displays the personal connection map graphically based on the retrieved secondary metadata ~~retrieved~~by displaying a tree structure based upon eliminating from the personal connection map a first link representing a weakest personal connection among N links, N being an integer greater than one, when a closed loop is formed by N nodes and the N links in the personal connection map, the tree structure including the N nodes and N-1 links other than the first link.

33. (cancelled)

34. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 32, wherein the nodes are correlated with a time-line in the personal connection map.

35. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 32, wherein the displaying unit further displays, when a plurality of nodes are selected from the personal connection map, a suitable venue for assembly of persons represented by the nodes selected.

36. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 35, wherein the displaying unit further displays an effect on an environment caused by the persons assembling to the venue.

37. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 36, wherein the effect on the environment is CO_2 emission.